Proposal for Academic Chairpersons Conference

Title of presentation: Evaluating the Quality of Online Courses: Challenges and Strategies for Success

Primary Presenter: Dr. Stephanie Boss, Chair, Department of Sports and Exercise Science, Cameron University, sboss@cameron.edu

Stephanie Boss received her Ed.D. from Walden University in 2015. She is an Assistant Professor and has been the Chair of the Department of Sports and Exercise Science at Cameron University in Lawton, Oklahoma for 6 years. She has release time each semester to complete internal reviews using the Quality Matters rubric and is also a course reviewer for Quality Matters in Higher Education and K-12.

Additional Presenter Information:

Dr. Dana Hilbert, Chair, Department of Education, Cameron University, dhilbert@cameron.edu

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Dr. Jennifer Dennis, Dean, School of Graduate and Professional Studies, Cameron University, jdennis@cameron.edu

Disciplines: Sports and Exercise Science, Education, and Psychology

Presentation topic theme: Issues and Trends in Higher Education

Target Audience: All department chairs and deans

Type of presentation: Best Practice Presentation (45 minutes)

Abstract for program and website: The department chairs of Education, Sports & Exercise Science, and Psychology and their dean, share their process for evaluating the quality of online courses with faculty in existing and newly developed courses. Training, internal and external reviews, and implementation strategies will be discussed in this session.

Keywords: Online Courses, Quality Assurance, Quality Matters, Course Design, Distance Learning

Objective(s) of the presentation:

1. Discuss significance of review process for maintaining quality of online courses.

2. Discuss benefits and challenges of methods used to achieve quality assurance of online courses.
3. Discuss strategies for improving quality assurance process.

Description of the session (300-500 words):

Since the inception of online learning in the 1990's, the rapid growth in the number of higher education students taking online courses has created a competitive environment that has prompted universities, schools, and departments to find creative and innovative solutions for evaluating and improving online instruction. In particular, academic department chairs and faculty "buy-in" and investment efforts towards distance education. Responsibilities such as determining which courses should be considered for online development, creating quality courses that meet defined standards and use of resources and professional developing opportunities to promote quality assurance of online courses will be explored in this workshop.

In this workshop, presenters will provide a model of how one small public university, with limited resources, has, and is currently going through, a process to ensure quality in online courses. Both pitfalls and successes will be shared through discussions of prior experiences.

Examples will include how department chairs identify which courses and/or programs should be considered for an online format. Additionally, ideas for training and supporting faculty and implementing a process for completing the timely and extensive work will be explored. Case studies from different departments will be presented and audience members will be asked to share their experiences.

Participants will be asked to identify their own unique challenges and successes from their institutions. Ideas will be shared about processes that work in obtaining faculty buy-in and advancing quality and rigor in online courses. Discussion of availability of support systems that improve the process will give participants a chance to share what works in different environments.

Ultimately, the quality assurance process should include those measures that support effective internal governance in order to create a culture that promotes continuous improvement in the quality of online education and student learning.